

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

With hurricane season approaching pet owners should make preparations both for themselves and their pets. One of the most important items to have available for your pet is a pet carrier. Carriers can be used to temporarily house animals and keep them in a secure area during a disaster. Plastic airline carriers can be purchased at pet stores, discount stores, and local military exchange. Pet owners should make a 72-hour emergency pack for their pets. The pack should include items such as fresh water, food, first aid supplies, restraint equipment, and an emergency blanket.

FEMA estimates that 2-3 million Americans are affected by disasters every year. This part of Virginia is susceptible to hurricanes, tornados, and large storms. Logistical obstacles to moving animals in disasters could result in failure of pet owners to evacuate themselves, delay in evacuation, or pet abandonment. Failures in evacuation jeopardize the safety of the general public, rescue workers, and the pet owners themselves.

Pets that are separated from their owners during a disaster can suffer both physical injury and emotional distress. Pets should be properly identified so that rescue workers can return them to their owners during instances when they are lost. A microchip is a form of identification that permanently identifies a pet. The microchip is placed under the skin by injection. Fort Eustis Branch Veterinary Services offers microchips for pets. Please contact the Fort Eustis VTF for further details at (757) 878-5824.

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